

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00

SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03

PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 MCT-01 HA-05 IO-13 /069 W

-----111160 121901Z /43

O 121816Z JUL 78

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5301

INFO AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

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E.O. 11652: N.A.

TAGS: PINS, PINT, SP

SUBJECT: MORE REACTION TO BASQUE VIOLENCE

REF: 1. MADRID 7864, 2. MADRID 7776

1. SUMMARY: TENSIONS CONTINUE TO RUN HIGH IN THE BASQUE COUNTRY JULY 12, PARTICULARLY IN VOLATILE SAN SEBASTIAN, WHERE BARRICADES REPORTEDLY BLOCK MOST ROUTES INTO THE CITY AND CUT IT OFF FROM THE BORDER. AN EXPLOSION ALSO HAS CUT THE RAIL LINES TO FRANCE. THERE WERE STREET CLASHES THIS MORNING, BUT DOWNTOWN SAN SEBASTIAN REPORTEDLY IS LARGELY DESERTED EXCEPT FOR POLICE PATROLS THIS

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AFTERNOON. BILBAO IS LARGELY SHUT DOWN, AMCONSUL REPORTS, BUT THERE HAVE BEEN NO REPORTS THUS FAR OF SERIOUS VIOLENCE TODAY. PAMPLONA AND VITORIA (ALAVA) APPEAR TO BE RETURNING TO NORMAL. THE GOVT HAS COME IN FOR CONSIDERABLE CRITICISM IN MADRID FOR THE ROLE OF THE POLICE IN THE PAMPLONA AND SAN SEBASTIAN DISTURBANCES -- AND THE TWO RESULTING FATALITIES -- AND INTERIOR

MINISTER MARTIN VILLA HAS TOLD THE CONGRESS OF DEPUTIES THAT HE WILL APPEAR BEFORE THE CHAMBER'S INTERIOR COMMITTEE WITH A FULL REPORT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. END SUMMARY.

2. SHOCK WAVES ENGENDERED BY THE PAMPLONA AND SAN SEBASTIAN VIOLENCE (REFTELS) CONTINUE TO REVERBERATE BOTH IN THE STREETS OF THE BASQUE REGION AND AMONG THE COUNTRY'S POLITICAL CLASS.

-- PAMPLONA: AMCONSUL BILBAO REPORTS THAT, ON THE BASIS OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATIONS JULY 12 WITH CONTACTS IN THE NAVARRESE CAPITAL, TENSIONS IN THE CITY CONTINUE TO WIND DOWN. IN SPITE OF THEECCL GOVERNOR'S EXPRESSED DESIRE TO RESUME THE SAN FERMIN FESTIVITIES, THEYRE DEFINITELY CANCELLED LAST NIGHT.

-- SAN SEBASTIAN: PREDICTABLY THE MOST CONFLICTIVE LOCALITY YN THE BASQUE COUNTRY, PARTICULARLY IN THE WAKE OF YESTERDAY'S FATALITY THERE, AMCONSUL BILBAO (AND THE MADRID PRESS) REPORT THAT THE GUIPUZCOAN CAPITAL WAS EFFECTIVELY SHUT DOWN TODAY, AND THERE WERE SOME STREET CLASHES THIS MORNING. TERRORISTS BLEW UP THE SAN SEBASTIAN-IRUN RAILROAD TRACKS, BARRICADES BLOCK MOST OF THE ROADS LEADING INTO THE CITY, AND THESE BARRICADES REPORTEDLY ALSO HAVE EFFECTIVELY SEALED OFF SAN SEBASTIAN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FROM THE BORDER. THE CIVIL GOVERNOR HAS BANNED ANY DEMONSTRATIONS AND THE CITY REPORTEDLY IS NOW LARGELY DESERTED EXCEPT FOR POLICE PATROLS, BUT THE FUNERAL FOR THE YOUTH SLAIN YESTERDAY IS SCHEDULED TO TAKE PLACE THIS AFTERNOON, AND THIS OBVIOUSLY REPRESENTS A POTENTIAL FLASH POINT. (THE EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED CALLS FROM A NUMBER OF WORRIED US CITIZENS WHO ARE STUCK IN SAN SEBASTIAN, INCLUDING A BUS-LOAD OF SOLDIERS ON TOUR FROM BAMBERG, GERMANY. THEY DO NOT APPEAR TO BE IN ANY DANGER, AND WE HAVE ADVISED THEM TO REMAIN INDOORS. WE ARE ALSO SENDING A CONSUL FROM MADRID TO THE SAN SEBASTIAN ARA TO DEAL WITH CONSULAR PROBLEMS AS THEY COME UP.)

-- BILBAO: AMCONSUL ALSO REPORTS THAT BILBAO IS LARGELY SHUT DOWN JULY 12, WITH A GENERAL STRIKE CALL BEING HEEDDED IN SOME QUARTERS, BUT WITH MANY BUSINESSMEN SIMPLY CLOSING DOWN TO AVOID TROUBLE. DOWNTOWN BILBAO WAS THE SCENE YESTERDAY AND LAST NIGHT OF SPORADIC CLASHES BETWEEN DEMONSTRATORS AND POLICE, AND SOME BARRICADES REPORTEDLY REMAIN UP TODAY.

-- VITORIA: THE ALAVESE CAPITAL WAS THE SCENE OF SOME STRIKE ACTIVITY AND STREET CLASHES JULY 12.

3. IN MADRID YESTERDAY, GOVT LEADERS MET AGAIN TO DISCUSS THE TROUBLED BASQUE SITUATION. INTERIOR MINISTER MARTIN VILLA ALSO FIRST MET WITH THE SPOKESMEN FOR THE VARIOUS PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS AND THEN ADDRESSED THE CONGRESS OF DEPUTIES PLENARY THAT ALREADY HAD BEEN SCHEDULED TO CONTINUE DELIBERATIONS ON THE ERR CONSTITUTION (AND WHICH RETURNED TO ITS ORIGINAL ORDER OF BUSINESS WHEN MARTIN VILLA HAD CONCLUDED). THE INTERIOR MINISTER TOLD THE

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ASSEMBLED MEMBERS OF CONGRESS THAT THE GOVT COULD NOT YET PROVIDE FULL INFORMATION ON THE PAMPLONA EVENTS, BUT THAT HE PERSONALLY WOULD APPEAR BEFORE THE CONGRESS' INTERIOR COMMITTEE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (PERHAPS AS EARLY AS MONDAY, JULY 17) TO PROVIDE A STATUS REPORT ON THE GOVT'S INVESTIGATION

- THE CONGRESS THEN OVERWHELMINGLY PASSED A RESOLUTION, WHICH HAD BEEN AGREED UPON EARLIER DURING THE MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP SPOKESMEN, ACCEPTING THE

INITIATIVE OF THE INTERIOR MINISTER, AND INVITING HIM TO
PROVIDE A WRITTEN REPORT ON THE GOVT'S INVESTIGATION AND
THEN TO APPEAR BEFORE THE APPROPRIATE CONGRESS COMMITTEE
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AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THE RESOLUTION ALSO CALLED ON THE
GOVT AND THE POLICE TO ACT "IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SERIOUS
RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MOMENT," AND "RESERVED" THE
POSSIBLE ADOPTION OF APPROPRIATE RESOLUTIONS WHEN THE
FACTS WERE KNOWN.

5. A NUMBER OF NON-UCD PARLIAMENTARIANS REPORTEDLY STATED
AFTERWARD THAT, WHILE THEY DID NOT WANT TO DO ANYTHING
THAT MIGHT UNDERMINE THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONSENSUS, THEY
FELT THE GOVT HAD GOTTEN OFF TOO LIGHTLY AS THE RESULT
OF TE SPOKESMEN'S AGREEMENT ON WHAT THESE DEPUTIES CON-
SIDERED AN ANODYNE RESOLUTION.

-- THE MOST OUTSPOKEN, NOT SURPRISINGLY, WERE MEMBERS
OF THE BASQUE.PNV, WHO REPORTEDLY THREATENED TO INITIATE
A VOTE OF CENSURE IF THE GOVT DID NOT MOVE EXPEDITIOUSLY
TO CORRECT THE "DISASTROUS" POLICY IT HAD PURSUED IN THE
BASQUE COUNTRY.

-- LATER IN THE DAY THE.PSOE DISTANCED ITSELF SOME-
WHAT FROM THE RESOLUTION, WHICH IT HAD SUPPORTED, BY
CALLING FOR THE IMMEDIATE RESIGNATION OF THE NAVARRESE
CIVIL GOVERNOR AS WELL AS THE FIRING OF ANY POLICE
OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ENTRY OF THE POLICE
CONTINGENT IN THE PAMPLONA BULL RING JULY 8. PSOE
SECGEN FELIPE GONZALEZ EVEN ALLUDED TO THE "POLITICAL
RESPONSIBILITIES" OF THE INTERIOR MINISTER IN THIS
MATTER, AND CRITICIZED THE EOO" FFILURE COMPLETELY
TO INFORM THE CONGRESS IMMEDIATELY.

-- FRAGA'S AP PREDICTABLY ACCUSED SUAREZ OF ONCE
AGAIN DEMONSTRATING THAT HIS GOVT COULD NOT ENFORCE
LAW AND ORDER.

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-- BUT NEITHER THE COMMUNISTS NOR THE CATALAN MINORITY
HAVE JOINED IN THIS SRITICISM OF THE GOVT.

6. ALTHOUGH SUAREZ APPEARS TO HAVE AMPLE PARLIAMENTARY
SUPPORT TO DEFLECT ANY ANTI-GOVT GAMBITS IN THE CONGRESS,

THE GOVT CLEARLY IS GOING TO HAVE TO DO A MUCH BETTER JOB OF RENDERING ACCOUNTS THAN IT HAS IN THE PAST. AT A MINIMUM, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THE CIVIL GOVERNOR OF NAVARRE WILL BE DISMISSED. THE QUESTION OF FIRINGS WITHIN THE ARMED POLICE IS CONSIDERABLY MORE COMPLEX BECAUSE IT INVOLVES QUESTIONS OF POLICE EFFICIENCY, MORALE AND UNITY IN THE TROUBLED BASQUE REGION, AND THE SENSITIVITY OF THE GOVT TO ANY MOVE ON ITS PART THAT MIGHT ENGENDER STRAINS IN THE PUBLIC ORDER FORCES, OR MILITARY, MORE GENERALLY.

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7. THE LONGER RANGE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE BASQUE TROUBLE REMAIN UNCLEAR. IT COULD WELL BRING THE GOVT TO TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT ITS GENERAL APPROACH TO THE BASQUE CONUNDRUM AND PERHAPS TO CONSIDER MOVING AHEAD MORE RAPIDLY WITH THE ELABORATION OF THE BASQUE AUTONOMY STATUTE, WHICH ALSO INVOLVES COMING TO GRIPS WITH THE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT QUESTION OF THE EVOLUTION AND COM-POSITION OF AN ETHNICALLY BASQUE PUBLIC ORDER FORCE IN THE

REGION. (IT WAS NOTEWORTHY IN PAMPLONA, FOR EXAMPLE,
THAT LOCAL POLICE COULD MOVE WITH IMPUNITY THROUGH HOSTILE
DEMONSTRATORS INTENT ON PROVOKING A CONFLICT WITH THE
NATIONAL ARMED POLICE.) AS FAR AS THE CONSTITUTION ITSELF

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IS CONCERNED, EVENTS OF THE LAST FEW DAYS HAVE ALMOST
CERTAINLY, AT LEAST FOR NOW, REDUCED THE MANEUVERING
ROOM OF THE BASQUE PNV. WHETHER THEY HAVE, HOWEVER,
ALSO MADE THE GOVT MORE WILLING TO GO AN EXTRA MILE WITH
THE PNV ON THE CONSTITUTION'S AUTONOMY PROVISIONS, OR
MADE IT MORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO PRESSURES FROM THE RIGHT
NOT TO DO SO REMAINS TO BE SEEN. EATON

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